



# Naval Medical Research and Development

## Enterprise Laboratories

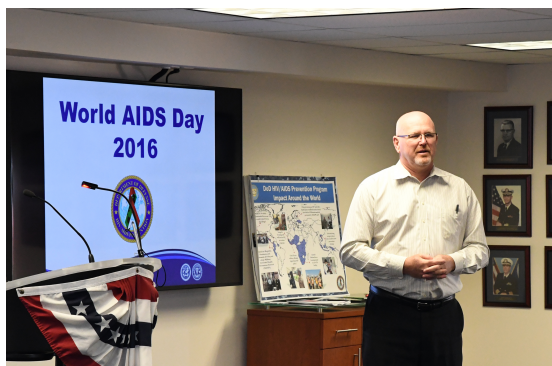
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## News Releases

### Every Day Is World AIDS Day for the DoD HIV/AIDS Prevention Program

Released: 1/1/2017

From NHRC Public Affairs



SAN DIEGO (December 1, 2016) Rick Shaffer, Ph.D. and director of the DoD HIV/AIDS Prevention Program (DHAPP) at the Naval Health Research Center leads a discussion about the work the U.S. military has done in fighting the global HIV/AIDS pandemic during a World AIDS Day event. Shaffer played a key role in early HIV prevention research at NHRC in the early 1990s and has been leading DHAPP since it was launched in 2000 as the DoD Leadership and Investment in Fighting an Epidemic Initiative, part of efforts by the White House and DoD to reduce threats to global security posed by infectious diseases. (U.S. Navy photo by Regena Kowitz/Released)

SAN DIEGO – The DoD HIV/AIDS Prevention Program (DHAPP), which is headquartered at the Naval Health Research Center (NHRC), hosted a World AIDS Day event Dec. 1, to mark how far the U.S. military has come in fighting the global HIV/AIDS pandemic.

“World AIDS Day is a time to look back and see how far we’ve come in combatting this disease and remember those we’ve lost,” said Dr. Rick Shaffer, DHAPP director. “It’s also a day to look forward and see what still needs to be done to end AIDS.”

Shaffer has been involved with HIV/AIDS prevention efforts since 1992, while an active duty medical service corps officer at NHRC, where the Navy played a key role in early HIV prevention research. He’s also been leading DHAPP since it was launched in 2000 as the DoD Leadership and Investment in Fighting an Epidemic (LIFE) initiative, part of efforts by the White House and the Department of Defense to reduce threats to global security posed by infectious diseases.

To raise awareness among their fellow scientists and support personnel at NHRC, DHAPP staff screened a video that was made in 1994, at the height of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the U.S. The video featured three active duty service members sharing their experience being HIV-positive. The video, “HIV Legacy,” focused on how HIV would impact the lives of these service members.

## News Releases

[R&D 2016 Senior, Junior and Blue Jacket Sailor of the Year Awards](#)

[Development of Malaria Vaccine for the Military is Accelerated by Human Challenge Testing](#)

[Study Reveals Two Distinct Stages of Deep Sleep Using Mobile Sleep Monitoring Devices](#)

[NMRC Hosts a Malaria Vaccine Symposium at the 64th ASTMH Meeting](#)

[New App for Military Hearing Conservation Programs Launched](#)

[NAMRU-Dayton Research Showcased During Air Force-Navy 5th Annual Open House](#)

[Every Day Is World AIDS Day for the DoD HIV/AIDS Prevention Program](#)

[How Researchers Maximize Their Readiness](#)

[NAMRU-SA Research Dentist Piques Interest of San Antonio Students During Career Day](#)

[R&D Chronicles - The Mosquito Fighters, Part X: Preventive Measures in the Atomic Age](#)

[NMRC Researcher Shares Results from Traveler’s Diarrhea Treatment Trial](#)

[Collaboration, Research and Development Leads to Acquisition Excellence Award for Fielding of a Device](#)

[NAMRU-2 Scientists Highlight Ongoing Dengue Research in Cambodia at ASTMH](#)

[NAMRU-6 Researcher Shows What Next Generation Sequencing Technologies Can Do](#)

[NAMRU-2 Scientists Highlight Ongoing Dengue Research in Cambodia at ASTMH](#)

[NMRC-A Researchers Collaborate with Malaysian Partners to Better Understand the Threat of MERS](#)

[The Mosquito Fighters, Part IX: Klamath Falls and the Navy’s Forgotten Filariasis Problem](#)

[NAMRU-2 Researcher Presents Rare Case study of Dengue Infection at](#)

“Watching the video in 2016, it provides a window into the past for how Sailors and Marines felt and how the epidemic impacted them,” said Shaffer. “At that time, one military service member a week was passing away from AIDS at Naval Medical Center San Diego. It’s important for those just now entering the public health and HIV/AIDS fields to understand how far we’ve come. The work we do makes a difference.”

According to Shaffer, the epidemic has changed over the past 35 years. What used to be a death sentence is now a manageable disease. HIV-positive women can give birth to HIV-negative children. Active duty military members that test positive for HIV can still have long, fulfilling careers serving in the military.

“Setting aside one day to reflect on this epidemic also reminds us of the millions of people who are alive, healthy, and productive because of our collective efforts,” said Shaffer.

One point that Shaffer emphasized was that they learned early on that education was not enough. He said that while we have made impressive gains towards controlling the spread of HIV, there are still millions of individuals around the world still suffering from this infection. We now know that addressing the continuum of care is a key intervention to controlling the epidemic and DHAPP is working to meet the 90-90-90 targets set by the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS that state by 2020:

- 90% of all people living with HIV will know their HIV status
- 90% of all people diagnosed with HIV infection will receive sustained antiretroviral therapy
- 90% of all people receiving ART will have viral suppression

According to the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, there are currently more than 36 million people living with HIV/AIDS around the world. The U.S., through initiatives like DHAPP that promote global security by fighting epidemics that threaten social and political instability in regions where American troops deploy, is leading the response to the worldwide HIV/AIDS crisis by being the medical “boots on the ground” and working in partnership with countries around the globe to end the AIDS pandemic by 2030.

“In many counties, the stigma of HIV is very high, and even when people know they are HIV-positive, they may decline treatment for fear of disclosing their status,” said Shaffer. “And, people who may be aware of how HIV is transmitted may still participate in risky sexual behavior. Education is important, but linking HIV-positive individuals to treatment and applying a multi-pronged approach to prevention is vital to ending AIDS.”

Beyond education, DHAPP’s strategy for fighting HIV/AIDS includes:

- Ensuring people know their HIV status
- Encouraging male circumcision, which can reduce the risk of acquiring HIV by approximately 60 percent
- Making condoms available and encouraging use, consistently and correctly every time
- Preventing mother-to-child transmission by providing antiretroviral drugs that can significantly reduce the risk of an HIV-positive mother passing the virus to her child

DHAPP currently works with foreign militaries in 62 countries, providing assistance with prevention, care, and treatment for HIV/AIDS. DHAPP’s staff consists of 40 people working at their headquarters at NHRC in San Diego, with 40 more attached to U.S. embassies around the world. For DHAPP, every day is World AIDS Day as they continue their fight to end the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

As the DoD’s premier deployment health research center, NHRC’s cutting-edge research and development is used to optimize the operational health and readiness of the nation’s armed forces. In proximity to more than 95,000 active duty service members, world-class universities, and industry partners, NHRC sets the standard in joint ventures, innovation, and translational research.